

REMARKS

Claims 13, 14, 17, 18 and 21-30 are pending in the above-identified patent application. Applicants note with appreciation that claims 21-30 are allowed. Claims 13-18 stand rejected. Claim 13 is currently amended. Claims 15, 16, 19 and 20 are canceled. No new matter is introduced by the amendments. In view of the following discussion, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

I. Rejection of Claims 13-18 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

At numbered parts 3-5 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. §103(c), as allegedly being obvious over Yasuoka et al. These rejections should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Yasuoka et al. does not disclose or suggest all aspects recited in the instant claims.

The claimed subject matter generally relates to an automatic drug dispenser for automatically ejecting various drugs. More particularly, an automatic drug dispenser is disclosed wherein it is checked if a drug cassette that ejectably stores a drug matches a base unit when the cassette is attached to or detached from the base unit. (*See* applicants' specification paragraph [0327]). To this end, independent claim 13 recites: a checking means which compares a result of reading with pre-stored check data; an overwriting means which overwrites the check data with the identification information read by the reading device. Yasuoka et al. does not teach or suggest such aspects.

Yasouka et al. provides for a medicine packing apparatus including a display unit with which a medicine housed state can be grasped at a glance, and prescription data can also be inputted. (*See* Yasouka et al. Abstract). The tablet feeder is equipped with a drive motor connected to a shaft of the rotor of the tablet cartridge via a gear when a tablet cartridge is mounted and a chute for guiding a tablet discharged from the tablet cartridge to a central passage. Furthermore, each tablet feeder includes a reader, and a display lamp, which is mounting site display means according to Yasouka et al. The reader is disposed at a position corresponding to the medicine identification unit of the tablet cartridge and reads tablet data from the medicine identification unit. (*See* Yasouka et al. paragraphs [0067] and [0068]). Thus, Yasouka et al. discloses verifying whether the mounted medicine container is correct or not by verifying if a registered identification code and an identification code of the medicine container

read by the reader match. However, it does not teach or suggest an overwriting means which overwrites the check data with the identification information read by the reading device as recited in independent claim 13.

In accordance with the claimed subject matter, "check data" assigned to each base unit is checked against cassette identification information attached to the drug cassette. If a compatible drug cassette is attached to the base unit, then the identification information retrieved from the drug cassette is stored in the memory of the microprocessor attached to the base unit. By allowing a drug cassette to be checked for identification at the base unit of each drug feeder, correspondence between subjects of checking is directly confirmed by visual observation. (*See* Applicants' specification as filed paragraphs [0123] and [0124]). Accordingly, preparation of check data is made easier by the claimed aspects.

In view of at least the foregoing, Applicants submit that the Examiner's rejections have been overcome, and respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) or 35 U.S.C. § 103(c), be withdrawn.

II. Allowable Subject Matter of Claims 21-30:

Applicants respectfully acknowledge that the Examiner has allowed claims 21-30 at numbered part 2 of the Office Action.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the instant claims are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited. In the event there are any fees due and owing in connection with this matter, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 11-0223.

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Respectfully submitted,

By: s/Bhavani S. Rayaprolu/
Bhavani S. Rayaprolu
Registration No.: 56583
GIBSON & DERNIER LLP
900 Route 9 North, Suite 504
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095
(732) 634-7634
Attorneys for Applicant